OWN THE ROOM

How to Be a Great Presenter In a World Full of Boring Ones

AKASH KARIA

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OWN THE ROOM

Presentation Secrets of the World's Best Speakers

AKASH KARIA
best-selling author of
"How to Deliver a Great TED Talk"
and
"Speak Like a Winner"

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ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Akash Karia is an award-winning speaker and communication skills trainer who has been ranked as one of the Top Ten speakers in Asia Pacific. He is the bestselling author of "Speak Like a Winner" (http://amzn.to/YyIaE7) and "How to Deliver a Great TED Talk" (http://amzn.to/11ql3ZV). He is currently the Chief Commercial Officer of a multi-million dollar company in Tanzania, in which capacity he leads the sales, relations and marketing departments of the organization.

FEATURING SPEECHES BY

JIM KEY
Out of more than approximately 195,000 Toastmasters in 70 countries worldwide, Jim (http://bit.ly/fUDLc5) was one of nine speakers who vied for this coveted title in August 2003. He emerged victorious as the 2003 World Champion of Public Speaking. Additionally, Jim is a sought-after keynote speaker and trainer from Canada to Kuwait, from New Zealand to New Mexico, and many places in between. Jim's presentations include examples to which people of every age and from every walk of life can relate. He blends humor with messages of gravitas to produce programs that yield results.

BYRON T. EMBRY
Byron T. Embry (http://bit.ly/162PYQZ) is CEO and Founder of Closing Remarks, LLC, a premier leadership development and communications organization. Byron has used his 12 years of experience as a professional baseball player to establish himself as an international speaker. He is regarded by many to be one of the most dynamic speakers in the world relating to leadership, personal and professional development.

KWONG YUE YANG
Kwong(http://bit.ly/19X1HTY) wowed audiences from around the world to become the first-runner up at the 2011 World Championship of Public Speaking contest. He is also the first representative from Asia to have achieved such a result, and the only person to have been China's National Champion for two consecutive years.

He specializes in helping people add impact to their communications skills as well as inspiring teams and organizations with his customized speeches.

DOUGLAS KRUGER
Douglas Kruger (http://bit.ly/104zWqK) is the only speaker in Africa to have won the Southern African Championships for Public Speaking a record five times. He is also Africa's only 2nd place World Champion! Competing in Reno, Nevada in 2004, he achieved the highest ranking Africa has ever attained at this prestigious contest. Not only is he a master at connecting with audiences, but his content is of an international standard. He is the author of '50 Ways to Become a Better Speaker' published in South Africa and Nigeria.

★

In this book, Akash will reveal to you the techniques the four world class speakers featured in this book use to **own the room.** What does it mean to 'own the room'? It means to keep your audience totally riveted by your speech. Using the tools you will discover in this book, you too will be able to keep your audiences hooked onto your every word.

CONTENTS

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

CHAPTER ONE
OWN THE ROOM

CHAPTER TWO
It's Not Too Late

CHAPTER THREE
How to Keep Your Audience Hooked onto Your Every Word

CHAPTER FOUR
The Only Thing Still Standing

CHAPTER FIVE
How to Create a Spellbinding Speech

CHAPTER SIX
Fortune Cookie

CHAPTER SEVEN
Creating a Speech that Contains Head, Heart and Humor

CHAPTER EIGHT
I Need Help

CHAPTER NINE
How to Create and Deliver a Powerfully Persuasive Speech

CHAPTER TEN
Wrap Up: How to Own the Room

ALSO BY THE AUTHOR

Chapter One
OWN THE ROOM

"Speech is power: speech is to persuade, to convert, to compel."
Ralph Waldo Emerson

What techniques do world-class speakers use to keep their audiences on the edge of their seats? How can you use these techniques to **own the room** and keep your audiences captivated by your presentation?

In this book, you will learn the storytelling and public speaking techniques used by four of the world's best speakers to keep their audiences engaged as well as entertained. More specifically, you will learn:

- **One fail-proof method for opening any speech or presentation**
- Powerful techniques for bringing your stories to life
- **The secrets to delivering a humorous speech or presentation**
- Proven tools for developing an unbreakable rapport with your audience
- **Rhetorical devices for keeping your audiences on the edge of their seats**
- Tools for ending your speech powerfully and persuasively
- **Delivery devices that keep your audiences hooked into your every word**
- Strategies to turn your stage into a visual prop for your audience
- **Tools for turning any speech or presentation into a mental movie for your audience**
- Techniques for designing, developing and delivering powerfully persuasive presentations that matter

This book contains the speeches of the four world class speakers featured in this book. I have found that the best way to master the art of public

speaking is to study speakers who are already great speakers. Thus, we will study and analyze the speeches of the four speakers featured in this book, followed by a line-by-line analysis of the speeches to uncover the tools and techniques used in the speech.

If you’re ready to become a powerfully persuasive speaker who owns the room, then let’s get started...

Chapter Two

It's Not Too Late

Speech by **Jim Key**
2003 World Champion of Public Speaking
http://www.JimKey.com

"The success of your presentation will be judged not by the knowledge you send but by what the listener receives."
Lily Walters

To get maximum value from this speech, I encourage you to watch Jim's speech (while it's still available).**Click here** to watch Jim live in action: http://bit.ly/18ZBpip

Next, read the speech transcript as it is reprinted below. As you read the speech, pay attention to the techniques Jim uses to keep his audience engaged. Jot down your observations on a piece of paper.

Finally, read my analysis of the speech and apply the techniques to your next speech so that you too can keep your audiences mesmerized by your speeches.

Enjoy the transcript of Jim's 2003 world-championship winning speech below:

★

The theater is quiet. The aroma of overpriced popcorn permeates the air.

You settle in for the perfect family outing, and then it happens: the film you are watching takes a sudden emotional turn. You try to resist, but you can't

help it!

Before you know it, your eyes begin to…sweat.

You may not care that people see you crying, but the last time it happened to me, I was thankful the theater was dark!!

But my young daughter, who doesn't know it's okay to whisper, pierced the darkness with: "ARE YOU CRYING?"

Mr. Chairman, Ladies and Gentlemen, and anyone who has ever gotten misty at a movie: Never ignore inquisitive children. The longer you do, the louder they get!

In a matter of seconds, my daughter shouted, "WHY ARE YOU CRYING, DADDY!?"

The movie my family and I were watching at that time was "The Rookie". On the surface, it's about the oldest rookie in baseball, but on a much deeper level, it's a story of reclaiming life's missed opportunities. When the movie ended and I realized what a great teaching opportunity I had, I turned to my two sons, and said "Guys, what did you learn from this?"

Imagine how proud I was when my 16-year old said…" I learned that my dad cries at the movies".

My 12-year old took the question, and his wellbeing, a bit more seriously. He said, "I learned that it's never too late to follow your dreams"…it's never too late to follow your dreams.

Why does it sometimes take a child to remind us of that? It's because children are uninhibited dreamers. Last year, I spoke to an elementary school assembly, and asked "If you could have any job in the world, what would it be?"

One little boy blurted out, "Oooohhh! I'd be the guy that rides on the back of the garbage truck"!!

His passion was proof that he knew something most adults have forgotten: dreaming is fun, it's natural, and it's necessary! Every notable accomplishment in human history… began as a dream.

Do you remember how you dreamed as a child?

Back then, we had a wonderful innocence, and could gaze into the future, and imagine all sorts of possibilities. Then we turn our focus to adulthood. Many of us find that by the time we get here, we hit a wall and stop dreaming, because we can't see past next week. Why? What happened!?

Somewhere along the way we learned a painful truth. We learned that failing to achieve our dream hurts.

We encounter critics, who ridicule and crush our dream, and it hurts. We hear an inner voice that cries out, "No more… I can't take being hurt again", and we convince ourselves it's better to give up our dreams, and simply do what we're supposed to do, instead of longing for what we were meant to do.

Ladies and Gentlemen, we were meant to dream!

Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., one of the greatest dreamers of our age, said, "The time is always right to do what is right". That means if it's right for us to dream as children, then it's just as right for us to dream as adults.

The question is: do we have the courage to dream?

I know a remarkable teen-aged girl who does. Her name is Nicole, and you should know that she is hearing impaired, vision impaired…and three years ago she survived a stroke. If anyone has the right to give up on dreams and accept "reality", she does.

Instead, I've watched Nicole redefine reality not according to her physical limitations, but according to the size of her dreams.

As part of that, two years ago, I saw her stand on a huge stage before almost three thousand people, and perform the sweetest song I've never heard. She

sang it with sign language that I didn't just see, but deep inside, I felt it! Instead of hiding behind justifiable excuses, there she was, teaching me: "It's never too late to follow your dream."

Ladies & gentlemen, what do you dream? …or is the better question: What **did** you dream, and why did you stop? If you have ever let a dream slip away, I'm here to tell you, it's not too late. If you can summon the courage to overcome your circumstances and your experiences and your critics, your dream can live!

Whether your dream is to make beautiful music, or to not get caught crying at the movies …if you dream of changing the world, or just riding on the back of a garbage truck … …if you forget everything else I've said, it would ***thrill*** me if you remember this!

It's never, too late to follow your dreams!

Chapter Three

How to Keep Your Audience Hooked onto Your Every Word

"Speakers who talk about what life has taught them never fail to keep the attention of their listeners."
Dale Carnegie

Universally Appealing Topic
When you choose a topic for your competitive speech, choose a topic which will appeal to everyone. It has to be a topic that both *you* and your *audience* will be interested in, and it has to be a topic that everyone in the audience can connect with.

Jim's topic about "following your dreams" appeals to everyone in the audience. No matter who is listening to the speech, the message (and the rhetorical questions in the speech) will connect with everyone.

Transport Your Audience into Your Story
Jim has a brilliant you-focused opening that transports audience members into his scene:

> *The theater is quiet. The aroma of overpriced popcorn permeates the air.*
>
> *You settle in for the perfect family outing, and then it happens: the film you are watching takes a sudden emotional turn. You try to resist, but you can't help it!*
>
> *Before you know it, your eyes begin to…sweat.*

This is a brilliant opening because it places the audience members inside the scene. It transports you into the story!

Whenever you transport your audience into your story and make them a part of your speech, you've got them hooked!

Set the Scene before Transporting Your Audience into It
The first thing Jim does is to set the scene:

> *The theater is quiet. The aroma of overpriced popcorn permeates the air.*

Once the audience has a mental image of what the scene is, he puts them into it:

> *You settle in for the perfect family outing, and then it happens: the film you are watching takes a sudden emotional turn. You try to resist, but you can't help it!*

This sequence is important because your audience first needs to imagine the scene before you can place them in it.

What happens if you don't follow this sequence?

I once listened to a speaker who tried a similar opening to Jim's. He started with the following sentence:

> *"You are in Egypt!"*

While this was a good you-focused opening (it did grab my attention), I struggled with imagining myself in Egypt because I have never been to Egypt.

This opening could have been even better if the speaker had first set the scene and described the part of Egypt he was talking about before he placed the audience members inside the scene.

Note: You *can* sometimes place the audience in your scene without having to describe it ifthe scene is something that your audience is already familiar

with. For example, you *could* start off with:

> *Imagine you are sitting at a movie theater…*

The above line works fine because most people have been to a movie theater, so your audience members won't necessarily struggle with picturing the scene.

If, however, you're talking about a scene that audience members aren't familiar with, you'll need to set the scene before you transport them into it.

By the way, just as a side note…the word "imagine" is a *very* powerful hypnotic word. It's a command that immediately transports your audience members into your scene. Use it!

Check the VAKOG
Consider the following two openings:

1. The theater is quiet. The aroma of overpriced popcorn permeates the air.You settle in for the perfect family outing…
2. Imagine you are sitting at a movie theater…

Which of the two openings do you like better?

Which one creates a better mental movie in your head?

If you're like most people, you prefer the first one.

Why?

Because the first description provides more sensory input than the second one. Let me explain.

We experience the world using our five senses (VAKOG)

1. Visual (sight)
2. Auditory (sound)

3. Kinesthetic (feeling or emotions)
4. Olfactory (smell)
5. Gustatory (taste)

Combinations of these five sensesmake up our experiences.

In his brilliant book, *Cashvertising*, Drew Eric Whitman writes:

> *"Any time we experience anything in life, a blend of these elements is always present. We call these elements "IRs" – internal representations – because they represent our experience of the world around us internally, in our heads. In fact, memory is just a blend of these elements. Whenever you recall any experience, whether it's the pizza you ate yesterday, or the roller coaster you screamed on 28 years ago, you're accessing a blend of these five elements; a set pattern that "equals" your experience."*

What this means is that the more of the senses we describe when setting our scenes, the greater the strength of the internal representation in our audiences' brains. Thus, the more sensory input we provide, the more "real" the scene becomes in the audiences' minds.

Let's check out the VAKOG elements in Jim's opening:

> *The theater is quiet. The aroma of overpriced popcorn permeates the air. You settle in for the perfect family outing…*

What can you see (visual)? You can probably see the theater. And you might even see yourself sitting down at the theater with your family.

> "*People won't remember what you say, as much as they'll remember what they see when you say it" - Patricia Fripp, CSP, Hall of Fame Speaker*

What can you hear (auditory)? In this case, you can *hear* the *silence*. That's right, silence is an auditory element. You can hear the *quietness* of the theater.

What can you feel (kinesthetic)? You might be able to *feel* the silence/quietness of the theater. You might even be able to feel the excitement of the "perfect" family outing.

What can you smell (olfactory)? That's right – "the *aroma* of overpriced *popcorn.*" By the way, smell is a really powerful sensory element. The moment you use sense of smell in your description, you automatically transport your audience members into your scene. In fact, if you describe something that smells really disgusting, your audience might crinkle their noses in repulsion and make mental statements like, "Oh, gross!" Similarly, if you describe the sweet scent of a freshly baked apple pie, your audience might make statements like, "Hmm, delicious" and "Wow, that smells great!"

Finally, what can you taste (gustatory)? You might/might not be able to taste the popcorn depending on how strongly you could visualize the popcorn. The important thing is, you don't have to have *all* the VAKOG elements as long as you have just three of them in every description.

Also, remember that different people have different learning styles. Some people are visual learners, whereas others are kinesthetic learners and yet others are auditory learners. Whenever you're setting a situation, make sure you cover at least some of the VAKOG elements so that you are reaching out and connecting with as many of your audience members as possible.

For your next presentation/speech, make sure you cover as many of the VAKOG elements as possible. The more elements you include, the more "real" your scene becomes to your audience and the easier it becomes to transport your audience into it.

Take on Your Characters' Voice and Posture

When Jim delivers his daughter's "Are you crying?" dialogue, he says it in a slightly high-pitched voice:

> *But my young daughter, who doesn't know it's okay to whisper, pierced the darkness with: "ARE YOU CRYING?"*

His facial expressions become very animated to take on the role of his daughter. The combination of the voice, the body language and the dialogue results in laughter.

Common Points Help Build Rapport
Jim starts the speech with a common point that he and his audience members have. Probably everyone in the audience has, at some point or another, watched a movie which touched them emotionally. By starting off with this common point, Jim builds rapport with his audience members because they begin thinking, "Yes, I've had that experience."

Talking about an experience that you and your audience members have in common will help build you build rapport with them.

Use a Movie, Book or Song to Lead into Your Main Point
In this speech, Jim uses a movie to lead into his main point. This movie profoundly touched Jim and taught him an important lesson, so he uses the movie to lead into his main point.

You don't have to have had a life-or-death experience to give a profound speech. Your important lesson can come simply from a movie you watched.

In his winning speech at the 1995 World Championship of Public Speaking, Mark Brown talked about what he learned from watching *Beauty and the Beast.* Although that wasn't his whole speech, he used *Beauty and the Beast* to lead into the main message of his speech. Like Jim's speech, it was an entertaining speech that delivered a very important message.

Which movie, book or song touched you and taught you an important lesson?

Use a We-Focus when Talking about Negative Ideas
Jim uses a we-focus when talking about giving up on dreams:

> *Back then, we had a wonderful innocence, and could gaze into the future, and imagine all sorts of possibilities. Then we turn our focus to adulthood. Many of us find that by the time we get here, we hit a wall*

and stop dreaming, because we can't see past next week. Why? What happened!?

Somewhere along the way we learned a painful truth. We learned that failing to achieve our dream hurts.

Why is a we-focus here better than a you-focus?

A you-focus would sound like the following:

Back then, you had a wonderful innocence, and could gaze into the future, and imagine all sorts of possibilities. Then you turn your focus to adulthood. Many of you find that by the time you get here, you hit a wall and stop dreaming, because you can't see past next week. Why? What happened!?

Can you see why a you-focus here would create a backlash from your audience?

Telling your audience, "You hit a brick wall and stop dreaming" can cause some of your audience members to think, "No, I haven't stopped dreaming! Who are you to tell me about me and my life? You don't even know me!"

When you're talking about failures and shortcomings, use a we-focus because it lets the audience know that:

1. You are generalizing when you say "Many of us" and are not specifically attacking the audience. When audience members hear a we-focused statement such as "many of us," they don't feel like you're attacking them personally.
2. It lets the audience know that you are including yourself in the category of people who have failed/given up on their dreams. Thus, you don't come off as preachy and the audience is more accepting of what you have to say.

The lesson here is that when you're talking about negative topics (failures, shortcomings, etc.) use a we-focus to soften the impact of the blow and

avoid backlash from your audience.

Avoid Huge Generalizations such as "All" and "No one"
At a Toastmasters meeting that I was attending, one speaker said in his speech, "*No one* knows how to respect each other anymore…*All of us* have lost their values and we need to reclaim those values!"

This was a very big generalization.

No one is respectful?

All of us have lost our values?

Such a huge generalization can cause audience members to think, "Hang on a minute! I'm offended…*I* am respectful and *I* haven't lost my values!"

Instead, this speech could have been better if the speaker had said, "Unfortunately, *too many* people don't know how to respect each other. *Most* people have lost their values…" This lesser generalization would avoid offending audience members.

Jim avoids huge generalizations in his speech by saying:

> *"Many of us find that by the time we get here, we hit a wall and stop dreaming"*

Quote for Credibility
Jim borrows the credibility of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. to prove his point. The most used Dr. King quote is, "I have a dream." Jim avoids using this clichéd quote and instead uses a different quote that proves his point better:

> *Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., one of the greatest dreamers of our age, said, "The time is always right to do what is right". That means if it's right for us to dream as children, then it's just as right for us to dream as adults.*

In your speech, avoid clichéd quotes. Don't settle for the most obvious quote.

Use Rhetorical Questions to Engage Your Audience
Jim asks a rhetorical question that gets his audience members thinking. Then, instead of answering the question immediately, he prolongs his audience's curiosity by diving into Nicole's story:

> *The question is: do we have the courage to dream?*
>
> *I know a remarkable teen-aged girl who does. Her name is Nicole, and you should know that she is hearing impaired, vision impaired...*

If you ask a rhetorical question, you don't necessarily need to answer it immediately. Instead, you can dive into a story and let your audience discover the answer within your story.

Tell a Third-Person Story
To prove his point about "it's never too late to follow your dreams," Jim uses a third-person story about Nicole.

In your speeches and presentations, you can use a third-person story to prove your point. However, it's best to use a story which no one else in the audience has heard. Too often, many speakers use the same stories about Einstein and Lincoln, and as a result, their speeches sound unoriginal and bland. If you personally know someone whose life taught you an important lesson, then go ahead and use that story.

Repeat the Key Message
Jim explicitly repeats his key message, "It's never too late" three separate times in his speech. It's even the title of his speech. When you repeat your key message, it sticks.

Signal You're Closing
Research shows that when you signal you are wrapping up your speech, with phrases such as "In conclusion" or "To wrap it up," audience attention dramatically increases.

However, you don't necessarily need to use clichéd and boring phrases such as "in conclusion" to signal you are closing. In this speech, Jim creatively signals that he is closing his speech by saying:

> *“If you forget everything else I’ve said, it would thrill me if you remember this...”*

Furthermore, the phrase draws audience attention by emphasizing the importance of what is going to be said next.

Find a creative way to signal the closing of your speech.

Leave Them with One Key Takeaway Message
Jim leaves his audience members with his key message by saying, “If you forget everything else I’ve said, it would thrill me if you remember this: It’s never too late to follow your dreams.”

What’s the one key message of your speech that you want your audience members to remember and act upon?

End with Something Memorable
Jim ends his speech in a very memorable way. He uses sign language to communicate the words, “It’s never too late.” Note that this only works because Jim has repeated his key message throughout the speech. Furthermore, since the sign language is related back to Nicole’s story, it’s a wonderful callback to her story.

If you’re giving a competitive speech, think about how you can end your speech in a memorable way.

Speaking Toolkit Summary #1

ACTIONABLE KNOWLEDGE

"They may forget what you said, but they will never forget how you made them feel."
Carl W. Buechner

- Open with a you-focused story
- If it's an uncommon setting, you need to spend more time setting the scene
- Take on your characters' voice and posture
- Establish common points between you and your audience
- Use a movie, book or song to lead into your main point
- Use a we-focus when talking about negative ideas
- Use "most/many" to avoid huge generalizations
- Choose a universally appealing topic
- Use quotes for credibility
- Use a rhetorical question to engage your audience
- Tell a third-person story
- Repeat the key message
- Leave them with a key message
- End with something memorable

Chapter Four

The Only Thing Still Standing

Speech by **Byron T Embry**
World Championship of Public Speaking Finalist
http://www.closingremarks.net/

"Put the argument into a concrete shape, into an image, some hard phrase, round and solid as a ball, which they can see and handle and carry home with them, and the cause is half won."
Ralph Waldo Emerson

Unfortunately, there is no video of Byron's speech available on the internet. However, you can still get a feel of Byron's speaking style by watching this video: http://bit.ly/16Wg1NB.

Enjoy the transcript of Byron's award-winning speech below:

★

She emerged from the basement.

The roof was gone, the walls were gone.

The only thing standing…was the foundation.

My mother's home…and everything in it…had been destroyed by a tornado.

She said, "That foundation was strong enough to protect me and support me through the worst conditions. That's what my love for you is like. It's unconditional. It's the foundation of who you are."

That was the story she told me as a kid, but it became a lesson she taught me many years later.

Madam Toastmaster, Honored Dignitaries,

Fellow Toastmasters and Welcomed Guests…

As a police sergeant, my mother was the baddest individual on the planet.

I called her the Hurricane because when I was in trouble…and she showed up…it got really quiet…like a storm was coming.

I had two options: evacuate or take shelter immediately.

Now, being the son of a police sergeant, I knew all too well that what you say can and will be used against you. Let me explain this. When I was thirteen, I had struck out for the third time in a row in a baseball game. I decide to do what the pros do and yell…a four letter word that echoed throughout the ball park.

All of a sudden, it got quiet…like a storm was coming.

I turned around. My mother had ran onto the field, grabbed me by the arm, escorted me to the car, looked at me and said, “If I ever catch you doing that again, I promise I will wash your mouth out with so much soap you will be the next poster-boy for Irish Spring!”

My senior year of high school, I decide to sneak out and go to my first beer keg party.

Oh, we had a blast…until the police showed up.

They take me to the police station.

Officer Reed sat me down and said, “The only reason we didn’t take you to jail…is cause your mother would kill you. So you got to two options: We can take you to jail for the night, or call your mother!”

I said, “Oh, that’s easy…Take me to jail!”

And all of a sudden it got quiet…like a storm was quiet.

I turned around and there she stood.

I was grounded for 25 years to life.

The only reason I'm here talking to you is because I'm on parole!

I get to college.

Mum called me every day, checking in on me.

Finally, I got tired of it and said, "I'm not a kid anymore mom. I'm on scholarship, I got a girlfriend who loves me, friends who support me…treat me like a man for once! I'm sure Dad felt the same way. No wonder he left!"

The breaking of her heart, echoed in her voice, as she said "Goodbye".

Eventually, I lost my scholarship. My girlfriend moved on and my friends turned their back on me.

Then I received a phone call.

My mother had been shot.

Thankfully she survived.

I got to the hospital and held her hand.

I said, "Mom, I'm sorry…and I've lost everything."

She said, "No you didn't. You never lost me. You never lost me! All these years, you thought I was your storm, but son, I'm your foundation. I protected you from the thunder of your father's violent temper, shielded you from the flying debris of financial difficulties. The roof of your social status may have blown off, the walls of your relationships may have crumbled down, but come hell or high water, this foundation will stand! I loved you in the womb, and I will love you when I go to my tomb. And there's

nothing you can do to change that…because my love's unconditional. It's the foundation…of who you are."

Till this day, my mother will tell you, if you've never loved something so much, but wanted to strangle it so bad…you've never had children!

Ladies and gentlemen, is the foundation of your love unconditional?

If so your loved ones can go through the storm and emerge from the basement…and realize that the roof is gone, the walls are gone…and the only thing standing…is you…the foundation.

They will turn to you and say, "I'm so glad you were strong enough to protect me and support me through the worst conditions. Your love for me is unconditional. It's the foundation…of who I am."

Madam Toastmaster…

Chapter Five

How to Create a Spellbinding Speech

"There are three things to aim at in public speaking: first, to get into your subject, then to get your subject into yourself, and lastly, to get your subject into the heart of your audience."
Alexander Gregg

Attention-Grabbing Opening
This is an attention-grabbing opening because it immediately begins with a short story. Byron wastes no time. As in a movie, he dives immediately into the action:

> *She emerged from the basement.*
>
> *The roof was gone, the walls were gone.*
>
> *The only thing standing…was the foundation.*

In just three sentences, Byron manages to paint the entire scene. This scene then serves as an analogy for the rest of the speech.

Create Curiosity with a Mystery Identity
Byron creates curiosity by starting with a mystery character.

The sentence, "She emerged from the basement" creates curiosity because it causes audience members to think, "She? Who is she?"

Have you ever come across a fiction book that used this tactic? Fiction authors sometimes like to employ this tactic by beginning the first sentence of their opening chapter with a mystery identity. It temporarily causes the reader to read on to find out who the mystery character is.

Of course, if you start your story with a mystery character, you will need to reveal the identity of the character within the next two to three sentences.

Create Humor with Callbacks
Byron repeats the phrase, "it got really quiet…like a storm was coming" three different times in the speech. This line gets a laugh from the audience every time.

Darren LaCroix, the 2001 World Champion of Public Speaking, explains this technique in one of his articles:

> *"If you have a laugh line that works consistently, it is a great idea to call back to it later in your presentation. A "call back" is a comedy term that simply means "calling back" to an earlier laugh line, referring to an earlier joke that worked. (It makes no sense to "call back" to one that does not.)*
>
> *The call back works best after the presenter moves on to a different topic. Then it is aided by the element of surprise, and a psychological connection with earlier laugh."*

Byron's callback is not only a humorous line, but it also makes a point that Byron thought of his mother as a hurricane, when really, she was his foundation.

In your speeches and presentation, when you get the opportunity to do so, call back to a previously funny line and you'll get a laugh from your audience.

Repeat a Sentence to Emphasize Its Importance
Using his mother's dialogue, Byron repeats the sentence, "You never lost me!":

> *She said, "...You never lost me. You never lost me!"*

Repeating a sentence or a phrase twice emphasizes the importance of the line. It also drives the idea deeper into the audience's mind.

For example, if the president of a company wants to emphasize the importance of hiring new talent, he could repeat his key sentence. For example, he could say:

> *"We can only be the best by hiring the best. (pause) We can only be the best…by hiring the best. We have to find the best people, to bring them into our company and to nurture their talents. We can only be the best…by hiring the best."*

If you want to emphasize an idea, you can repeat it to emphasize its importance.

Connect the Message to Your Audience

Byron applies his message, and his analogy, to his audience's lives:

> *Ladies and gentlemen, is the foundation of your love unconditional?*
>
> *If so your loved ones can go through the storm and emerge from the basement…and realize that the roof is gone, the walls are gone…and the only thing standing…is you…the foundation.*

In your speeches and presentations, always directly apply your message to your audience because, ultimately, your speech is not about you, it's about your audience.

Speaking Toolkit Summary #2

ACTIONABLE KNOWLEDGE

“What is conceived well is expressed clearly.”
Nicolas Boileau-Despréaux

- Start with an attention-grabbing opening
- The mystery identity technique is a good way to create temporary curiosity
- Create humor with callbacks
- Repeat a sentence if you want to emphasize its importance
- Connect your message (and your analogy) to your audience

Chapter Six

Fortune Cookie

Speech by **Kwong Yue Yang**
2011 World Championship of Public Speaking First Runner Up
http://www.simple-communication.com

"A good orator is pointed and impassioned."
Marcus Tullius Cicero

To get maximum value from this speech, I encourage you to watch Kwong's speech.**Click here** to watch him live in action:
http://bit.ly/HZ020M

Enjoy the transcript of Kwong'sspeech below:

★

My mama always said, "Life is like a box of…*fortune cookies*…you never know what you're gonna get".

Ladies and Gentlemen, Fellow Toastmasters, Elvis Presley *(when Kwong says "Elvis Presley", he uses an open-palm to point at the Contest Chair, which generates some laughter)* – Contest Chair – have you ever received a fortune cookie that was full of bad advice?

Yeah, my life was like a box of fortune cookies…*full* of bad advice.

You see, I was a little Chinese boy growing up in Australia, and knowing what advice to take was like mixing soya sauce and tomato sauce…they don't match.

You see, I was this little boy…and when I should have been outside playing, Tiger Mum had me locked up studying. And as a college student, when I should have been home studying, I was outside playing.

All my life, it was hard me for know what piece of advice I should take.

And then one day, I took my best friend Andy's advice. He said, "Kwong, quit your job in Australia and lets move to China! You see, in China, that's where it's all happening – that's where all the money's at. I've got friends, I've got family, I've got connections! We can start our own business, we can start a factory, we can even sell *fake American goods* …and we'll sell them to Americans!"

To me, that sounded great, and the next thing I knew, I was off on a plane to China. And as you can see, China on this stage is really far away! But when I finally got here, I went straight into the countryside, straight into a factory, and straight into digging coal.

You see, my best friend Andy said to me, "All the greatest CEOs of our time started…from the bottom!"

Digging coal and shoveling it into a furnace at five dollars a day… definitely the bottom!

I did this for four months! It took me four months before my brain switched on and said, "What on Earth was Andy thinking? Was he crazy? Two college students digging coal and shoveling it into a furnace?"

So I wanted to get out. But the problem was I didn't know what I wanted to do with my life. Should I go back to Australia? Should I stay in China? Should I invent a machine that could actually dig coal?

So what I did next was I went around and asked all the people I knew… because the fact was, I couldn't trust myself – so I asked all my family, friends, relatives.

I asked my uncle, and he said, "Kwong, go back to Australia!"

I asked my entrepreneur friend and he said, “Kwong, start your own business!”

And I asked my girlfriend, and she said, “Kwong…go away!”

Again, I was getting all these pieces of conflicting advice and I didn’t know what to do. And then a friend of mine said, “Kwong, why don’t you go see a fortune teller?”

Fortune teller, fortune cookies, Fortune 500…nothing to lose!

So there I went…went off to the markets, down the alley, around the street in-front of the old man who claimed to be a fortune teller. I told him my problem and he said – well, he took my hands first and he said – “You see this line? That’s your career line! Very short! And you see this line? That’s your brain line. Short, also. And you see all these lines that criss-cross your hands?”

“Yeah, that’s where I am right now. Each line represents a different opportunity and it’scriss-crossing going in different directions and that’s why I don’t know where I wanna go!”

“Moisturize more!”

Since when was fortune telling skincare advice?

And that’s when it dawned on me…that the answer…was in *my* hands.

You see, nobody could moisturize my hands but me. Yeah, hopefully.

And nobody could keep my hands dry and rough like me.

See, when I went around asking people, “What do I want in life?” it was pulling their hands across and saying, “What do I want to do in life? What job do I want? What am I passionate about?”

How would they know? The answer was with me.

The problem was…I just didn’t trust myself.

And isn’t it easier to go blame others…than to blame (point at self)

That’s when I took my life into my own hands. I quit that job in the factory, I didn’t go back to Australia, and I didn’t start a business.

I looked at what I really wanted in life and I just wanted a flexible job that would give me the time and the energy to do the things I loved, like public speak, entertain and to do sports. That was the key.

And I didn’t tell you…that day, when I left the fortune teller, he gave me a tube of moisturizing cream…and a fortune cookie.

And when I broke open the fortune cookie, the message was blank. Best piece of advice I ever got!

The answer for me – and the answer for you – is not in a fortune cookie or with some fortune teller – it’s not within his hands, her hands or anybody else’s hands. Trust yourself. The answer is in…your hands.

Chapter Seven

Creating a Speech that Contains Head, Heart and Humor

"A speech is poetry: cadence, rhythm, imagery, sweep! A speech reminds us that words, like children, have the power to make dance the dullest beanbag of a heart."
Peggy Noonan

Put a Twist on a Cliché
Kwong begins his speech with what seems like a cliché. Naturally, audience members expect him to say, "Life is like a box of chocolates." However, Kwong puts a twist on this cliché by saying, "Life is like a box of…*fortune cookies.*"

Notice that before the twist, Kwong has a brief pause to build up the expectation that he is going to say "chocolates" but instead breaks the expectation by saying "fortune cookies." The breaking of the expectation results in laughter.

This twist on the cliché works great because it fits in perfectly with the theme of the speech. Furthermore, because Kwong is Chinese, the twist about fortune cookies seems appropriate.

In your speeches and presentations, can you put a twist on a cliché? It will give you great points for creativity and will cause audience members to laugh.

It's Okay to Poke Fun at Someone as long as You Have Their Permission

Kwong pokes fun at the Contest Chair (for non-Toastmasters: the Contest Chair is the emcee of the speech contest) by calling him Elvis Presley:

> *"Ladies and Gentlemen, Fellow Toastmasters, Elvis Presley (when Kwong says "Elvis Presley", he uses an open-palm to point at the Contest Chair, which generates some laughter) – Contest Chair – have you ever received a fortune cookie that was full of bad advice?"*

This resulted in laughter because the audience knew Kwong was simply joking around (plus, the Contest Chair *could* have passed for an Elvis Presley imitator). The joke wasn't offensive and Kwong's demeanor clearly showed that the joke was in good spirits.

In your presentations and speeches, it is okay to poke light-hearted fun at the introducer. However, you have to be careful that the joke isn't offensive. Even better, before your speech, ask the person you will be poking fun at if it would be okay for you to poke fun at them. If you have their permission, they can't be offended.

In one of my speeches, I poked fun at one of the important people sitting in the audience. It was a light-hearted remark that caused laughter. However, before the event, I had previously asked the person if he'd be okay with the joke I was making. I only made the joke because I got his permission.

If you're going to be poking fun at someone, make sure the joke is not offensive and you have the permission of the people who are the butt of the joke.

Tap and Transport
Kwong taps into his audience's world with a question that gets them thinking about their situation:

> *"Have you ever received a fortune cookie that was full of bad advice?"*

The question gets audience members reflecting on the times that they've received bad advice.

After asking the question, Kwong transports the audience into his story:

> *"You see, I was a little Chinese boy growing up in Australia, and knowing what advice to take was like mixing soya sauce and tomato sauce…they don't match."*

The tap and transport technique builds rapport with the audience by getting them to reflect on their life. Tap into your audience's world with a question, and then transport them into your story.

Use the Stage to Show Your Story

When Kwong says, "I was off on a plane to China," he walks to the left-hand side of the stage. By physically moving to a different part of the stage, Kwong enables his audience to "see" his move from Australia to China.

At the World Championship of Public Speaking, the stage is decorated with the flags of the different countries represented in the Toastmasters organization. The flag for China is located at the far left-hand side of the stage, so while walking to the spot where China's flag is located, Kwong says:

> *"And as you can see, China on this stage is really far away!"*

This comment gets a laugh from the audience because it shows Kwong realizes just how far he's walking on stage.

Normally though, it's recommended that you keep your movements on stage subtle. For example, if you're talking about moving to another country, you don't have to walk all the way to the other side of the stage. Instead, walking a few steps to the right is enough to demonstrate effective use of the stage.

If you're shifting from one scene to another in your speech, you don't have to take massive strides to the other end of the stage. Instead, taking a couple of steps is sufficient to make the stage come alive as a visual demonstration of the story.

However, in this case, since China's flag was located at the extreme end of the stage, Kwong uses the opportunity to poke fun at how far he has to walk, which then results in laughter.

Establish the Conflict
Telling a story where the main character faces some kind of difficulty creates empathy from the audience:

> *"I went straight into the countryside, straight into a factory, and straight into digging coal…*
>
> *Digging coal and shoveling it into a furnace at five dollars a day… definitely the bottom!"*

Kwong then immediately thrusts his audience members into the conflict:

> *"So I wanted to get out. But the problem was I didn't know what I wanted to do with my life. Should I go back to Australia? Should I stay in China? Should I invent a machine that could actually dig coal?"*

When they are thrown into a conflict, audience members become curious and begin thinking, "I wonder how this conflict will be solved!"

In your speech, share a problem that needed solving and then establish the conflict that you encountered as you tried to solve the problem. The problem (or the pain) you faced will gain you your audience's empathy. The conflict will keep your audience on the edge of their seats wanting to find out how the problem was solved.

Use the Rule of Three for Humor
The rule of three is the easiest formula you can use to create your own humor. Using the rule of three, you use two statements to create an expectation, and then break it with the third statement.

In this speech, Kwong uses the following two pieces of dialogue to create the expectation that something profound will be said in the third piece of dialogue. Then, in the third piece of dialogue, he breaks the expectation, resulting in laughter:

I asked my uncle, and he said, "Kwong, go back to Australia!"

I asked my entrepreneur friend and he said, "Kwong, start your own business!"

And I asked my girlfriend, and she said, "Kwong…go away!"

Imitate an Accent

When delivering the fortune-teller's dialogue, Kwong puts on a Chinese accent which makes the dialogue funnier than without the accent:

I told him my problem and he said – well, he took my hands first and he said – "You see this line? That's your career line! Very short! And you see this line? That's your brain line. Short, also. And you see all these lines that criss-cross your hands?"

Note that the Chinese accent is not offensive because Kwong himself is Chinese, hence it's socially acceptable for him to be making fun of the Chinese accent.

In your stories, if you have a character that has a strong accent, then you can deliver the dialogue using the character's accent. However, whether or not you should imitate an accent depends on:

- Who your audience is and whether they will find the accent offensive
- What the occasion is and whether adopting the accent is appropriate for such an occasion
- Whether you can pull off a sincere and accurate imitation of the accent

If there is any doubt about whether or not imitating an accent will be offensive, don't use it!

Use Pace to Reflect the Mood

Kwong makes great use of pacing to reflect the mood of the speech. For example, consider the following piece of dialogue:

"Yeah, that's where I am right now. Each line represents a different opportunity and it'scriss-crossing going in different directions and

that's why I don't know where I wanna go!"

Kwong delivers the above piece of dialogue at a very fast pace which recreates the tense and desperate mood that Kwong was feeling at the time.

When rehearsing your speech, go through each line asking yourself, "What mood do I want to create here?" Use your volume and pace to help create the intended mood.

Link Your Message to Your Audience

Kwong shares his own personal, humorous story and leaves his audience with a profound lesson that he learned from his conflict. At the end of his speech, he links his message directly to his audience's life:

> *"The answer for me – and the answer for you – is not in a fortune cookie or with some fortune teller – it's not within his hands, her hands or anybody else's hands. Trust yourself. The answer is in…your hands."*

Make sure you link your message to your audience's life.

Speaking Toolkit Summary #3

ACTIONABLE KNOWLEDGE

"Your purpose is to make your audience see what you saw, hear what you heard, feel what you felt. Relevant detail, couched in concrete, colorful language, is the best way to recreate the incident as it happened and to picture it for the audience."

Dale Carnegie

- Put a twist on a cliché
- If you're poking fun at someone, make sure you have their permission
- Use the tap and transport technique
- Use the stage to show your story
- Create empathy by sharing the character's problem
- Creates curiosity about how the problem will be solved by establishing the conflict
- Use the rule of three for humor
- Adopt your character's accent when delivering dialogue
- Use pace to recreate the mood
- Avoid verbal crutches
- Link the message to your audience

Chapter Eight

I Need Help

Speech by **Douglas Kruger**
First-Runner Up at 2004 World Championship of Public Speaking
5 Time South Africa Public Speaking Champion
http://www.douglaskruger.com/

"Speak clearly, if you speak at all; carve every word before you let it fall."
Oliver Wendell Holmes

You can watch a short clip of one of Douglas's speeches here:
http://bit.ly/13CFHZl

Next, read the speech transcript as it is reprinted below and try to spot the techniques he uses to keep his audience captivated.

Enjoy the transcript of Douglas's powerfully persuasive speech below:

When you hear
'Self Improvement'
(smile)
…what springs to mind?

A course?
A coach?
The pages of a Carnegie classic?

Or maybe a **motivational speaker**?
The one with the chin and the grin.

You remember him. He's the one who told you:
"Turn the person on your left: Tell him, you are powerful.
Turn to the person on your right: Tell her, you have nice… (*Indicating chest)*
…are powerful."
He'd emblazoned the word 'Yes!' across his chest,
Just in case he forgot his own message!

Mr. Contest Chair,
Fellow Toastmasters,

Whenever *I* think Self-Improvement,
I usually think of a trip to the gym.

A while back, I was running up a sweat on a treadmill (run)
When an old friend spotted me across the crowded gym.
He walked over, stopped beside me,
And did the logical thing to do.
He said, "Hey Doug! How you doing?"
So I did the logical thing to do:
I turned to shake his hand.

(Stop. Pause. Rub brow).

There I was, and then instantly, there I *wasn't*.
The trouble with falling on a treadmill is that you don't just fall down.
I hit the back wall at 150!
You end up with your ankles around your ears
Trying to make it look like you did that on purpose.
Turns out, no onelaughs as loudly as women in leotards.
I lay there in a heap, thinking, "My friends were right. I do need help."

Actually, ironically, it turns out that **real** self-improvement
does begin with those words:
"I… need… help."

I learnt that from a man named Alan Cheek.
Alan's the kind of guy everyone's better off for knowing;

He’s warm, friendly, fantastic company.
He’s annoyingly good at cross-word puzzles.

Many years ago,
Alan married the woman he loved.
Their family soon grew to include a healthy son and a beautiful baby girl.

But our plans
and our dreams
don’t always align with the lives we live.
Sometimes, in even the most loving homes,
the darkness finds a crack, (showing ‘under the door’)
sometimes it seeps in, (still down, show ‘seeping under’)
sometimes it ruins the things we treasure the most.

Alan… *lost* the woman he loved.
and a part of his spirit went with her,
as if his soul had been torn in two,
And **he’d** been left with the smaller half.

So Alan fell back on an old bad habit.
He drank.
He drank until he lost everything.
He drank until his children were taken away.

Years dragged by as he tried to hide his habit,
Tried to veil his misery in the even deeper darkness of Denial.
He was like a boxer in a darkened ring,
fighting an unseen enemy,
swinging at air and emptiness,
unable to land a punch.

Alan might have lost his life,
had he not hit rock… bottom…
In desperation and in pain,
broken in heart and in spirit,
he***finally*** cried out:
I… need… help.”

That was when the first flicker of light came back into his life.

Family, friends, faces he thought had forgotten him,
Began to rally around;
because it was only when he completely surrendered,
denied his own strength,
took the hand of another,
(right hand way out, walk as if crossing a beam)
that Alan was able to place one frail foot in front of the other,
And begin the road to recovery.

In surrender, to his surprise, he found (lean forward and 'find')…
hope!
Turns out, the greatest show of strength…
is the **courage** to say: "I… need… help!"

These days… **that'snot** what we're taught.

We have to be 'independent,'
The treadmill of self-improvement churns out:
Kellogg's Rice Competitors,
Kentucky Fried Performers,
Supersized Mc-Men and Women,
Egos bigger than buildings,
all fighting fiercely one against the other,
all crying:
"I'm stronger than you and I'll push you down to prove it!"

Fellow Toastmasters,
do you know what the truest form of strength is?
Stop…
…and speak the words:
"I… need… help."
Umuntungumuntungabantu
It's a Zulu phrase:
"A person is only a person *because* of other people."
The truest form of strength is Love.

Show your courage.
Speak the words:
“I… need… help.”

Alan did that.
It was in a quiet room,
down one ward of a whitened clinic where his recovery began,
that I asked his permission
to marry his only daughter.
Alan didn’t answer me.
I watched his lips tighten,
His eyes glisten,
Tears begin to well.
I had no idea I was *that* disappointing.

A year later, when Vanessa Cheek joined her life to mine,
(show wedding ring)
Alan Cheek was there,
sober, strong,
out of the darkness, walking in the light.
His *courage* in asking for help meant that he got to walk his baby girl down the aisle,
Kiss her,
And give her away.

And with a surname like that, when I heard:
“You may kiss her on the cheek,” I really went to town!
(hand-rub, during laughter)
Real power, real potential, real progress…
starts with **surrender**.
The truest form of strength is not independence,
but Love.
Sometimes the most courageous thing we can do is to admit:
“I… need… help!”

Fellow Toastmasters, this knowledge is a ***gift!***
But it’s a gift I cannot give to you.
No treadmill, or trainer, or teacher can make it yours,

To own it, *you* have to *ask* for it.

Three words:
“I… need… help.”

Chapter Nine

How to Create and Deliver a Powerfully Persuasive Speech

"It's not how strongly you feel about your topic, it's how strongly they feel about your topic after you speak."
Tim Salladay

Open with a You-Focused Question
Douglas opens with a you-focused question:

> *"When you hear "Self Improvement", what springs to mind?"*

This question immediately sets the theme for the speech.

Douglas then gives his audience members some options for some answers:

> *"A course?*
>
> *A coach?*
>
> *The pages of a Carnegie classic?"*

By the end of Douglas's speech, audience members will answer the question posed at the beginning of the speech differently from how they might have answered it at the start…but more on that later.

Alliteration
Douglas makes brilliant use of alliteration throughout the speech, which gives his words a musical quality:

“A course?A coach?The pages of a Carnegie classic?”

“Real power, real potential, real progress…”

“…first flicker of light came back into his life.
Family, friends, faces he thought had forgotten him…”

Alliteration Helps Strengthen the Connection between Two Similar Ideas

Apart from adding a musical quality to the words, alliteration also helps link different concepts together and makes them seem more closely related to each.

For example, consider the following two lines:

(i) A course? A coach? The pages of a Carnegie classic?

(ii) A workshop? A coach? A self-improvement book?

Both (i) and (ii) are referring to the exact same concepts. However, which line do you perceive as having a stronger sense of connection between the different elements?

The three elements in line (i) seem to be more closely related to each other. The three elements in line (i) feel like part of the same category because of the alliteration.

In your presentations, you could use alliteration to demonstrate a linkage between two ideas. It’s a tricky little technique that works extremely well.

Here’s an example:

Which sentence do you think demonstrates a better cause and effect relationship?

(A) Our *over-reliance* on foreign oil will *devastate* our economy.

(B) Our*dependence* on foreign oil will *devastate*our economy.

Notice how the alliteration in (B) helps strengthen the connection.

Which line do you think you will remember longer?

It's much easier to remember "Dependence = Devastation" than it is to remember "Over-reliance = Devastation."

So, when crafting your Power Phrase/"Phrase that Pays," make use of alliteration.

Alliteration is a powerful tool in your speaking arsenal so apply it!

Take on the Posture of Your Character
Douglas uses not only his words, but also his body language, to show the typical motivational speaker with the "chin and the grin." He takes on the posture of a motivational speaker and stands with his chest up, his feet wide and a huge smile plastered across his face to let the audience "see" the cheesy motivational speaker.

Take on the posture of your character to allow the audience to see the character.

Find the Common Point with Your Audience
If you want to build rapport with your audience, look for common points with your audience. These common points are experiences and attitudes that you and your audience both have in common.

In Douglas's speech, the common point is that both Douglas and his audience members are familiar with motivational speakers. As Toastmasters members, Douglas's audiences have heard or seen a motivational speaker. Thus, when Douglas brings up the subject of motivational speakers, they think, "Yeah, I know what he's talking about!"

> *Or maybe a **motivational speaker**?*
> *The one with the chin and the grin.*
> *You remember him. He's the one who told you:*
> *Turn the person on your left: Tell him, "You are powerful".*

What common points do you have with your audience?

Smooth Transition from You-Focused Questions to I-Focused Story

Douglas begins his speech with a you-focused question and then smoothly transitions into this story:

--- You-focused question: "*When you hear "self-Improvement**,"** what springs to mind?"*

--- Smooth transition:"*Whenever I think self-improvement, I usually think of a trip to the gym…"*

--- I-focused story: "*A while back, I was running up a sweat on a treadmill…"*

As a result of the you-focused opening, Douglas's audiences will be connecting his story to their personal experience throughout the rest of his speech.

Set the Scene Quickly
Douglas quickly sets the scene so that the audience can picture the situation.

> *"A while back, I was running up a sweat on a treadmill*
> *When an old friend spotted me across the crowded gym."*

Where was he? In a gym.
What was it like? Crowded.
What was he doing? Running on a treadmill.

These are the essential pieces of information for the audience to be able to picture the scene. Audience members can add any other details using their own imaginations.

In your speeches and presentations, set the scene quickly so as to not slow the story down.

Your Audience Should Be Able to "See" Your Speech
When Douglas says that he was "running up a sweat," he runs on the spot to let the audience "see" his speech.

When Douglas says, “I turned to shake his hand,” he turns on stage.

Douglas reenacts and plays out the entire story on stage so that his audience can see his speech.

You-Focused Speaking
The most important word in public speaking is the word “you.” It’s never about the speaker; it’s always about the audience.

You’ll notice that Douglas’s speech is highly you-focused. Even when Douglas is recounting his own experiences, he’s focusing on his audience.

For example, he says, “*you* don’t just fall down. I hit the back wall at 150! *You* end up with *your* ankles around *your* ears…”

Douglas uses his experience and then places the audience in his situation, making them imagine what it would be like for them to be in his position.

If you would like to have your audiences hooked onto your every word, then create a “you-focused” speech.

Describe Your Characters’ Personality/Physical Appearance
There are two ways you can describe the major characters in your speech.

First, you can describe the **physical appearance** of your characters**.** For example, Douglas could have said, “I learned that from a man named Alan Cheek. He’s a towering man, 6’2, 300 pounds, and with a big smile that radiates warmth.” This description allows the audience members to picture Alan in their mind.

A second way is to describe the **character’s personality**, the way Douglas does:

> *“He’s warm, friendly, fantastic company. He’s annoyingly good at cross-word puzzles.”*

Because this description lacks physical details, audience members will construct an imaginary model of what they think a “warm, friendly” person looks like.

Either method (or a combination) is fine, as long as you describe your main characters so that your audience can imagine them.

Use "We" and "Our" for Bad News
When delivering bad news in speeches, it's best to switch from a you-focus to a we-focus.

In this case, the bad news is:

> *"Our plans and our dreams don't always align with the lives we live."*

Using the we-focus includes you, the speaker, in the bad news and shows that you're not claiming yourself to be above the problems.

A you-focus for bad news, such as saying, "*Your* plans and *your* dreams don't always align with the life that *you* live," would cause audience members to think, "You can't tell me about my life because you know nothing about me!"

Use Imagery to Paint Pictures in Your Audience's Mind
Instead of saying "bad luck finds even the most loving homes," Douglas uses the imagery of darkness seeping through under the door. This imagery will be remembered longer than a statement about bad luck:

> *"Sometimes, in even the most loving homes,*
> *the darkness finds a crack,*
> *sometimes it seeps in,*
> *sometimes it ruins the things we treasure the most."*

Furthermore, the image of Alan's soul being torn in two is a powerful and vivid image that will be remembered by Douglas's audience:

> *"Alan… lost the woman he loved.*
> *and a part of his spirit went with her,*
> *as if his soul had been torn in two,*
> *And **he'd** been left with the smaller half."*

Here is another example of imagery in Douglas's speech:

- “when the first *flicker of light* came back into his life…” (The flicker of light represents hope)

In your speeches and presentations, look for ways to add imagery because the images you paint in your audience’s mind will be remembered longer than the words youspeak.

Furthermore, examine your word choices to make sure that you’re using the most emotionally powerful words. Let’s have a look at the word choices in Douglas’s speech:

- *“Years dragged by as he tried to hide his habit…”*

Most people’s first choice would be to say: “Years *went* by as he tried to hide his habit.” However, the word *“dragged”* is a better choice because it’s a visual word (it conjures an image of an object being painfully pulled along the ground).

- *“Tried to veil his misery in the even deeper darkness of Denial…”*

It would also be most people’s first choice to say, “tried to *hide* his misery,” but the word *“veil”* is again a better word because it’s an image-provoking word.

- *“…as if his soul had been torn in two…”*

The word *torn* is a perfect visual word which conveys the pain of separation.

When editing your speech, look for the best words which paint a picture in your listeners’ minds.

Establish the Conflict

Douglas quickly establishes the conflict in his speech: Alan's struggle with drinking…and it seems like Alan is losing:

> *"So Alan fell back on an old bad habit.*
> *He drank.*
> *He drank until he lost everything.*
> *He drank until his children were taken away."*

Establish the conflict as quickly as possible in your story.

Anaphora + Rule of Three
Anaphora is a literary device which refers to repeating the same word (or phrase) at the beginning of successive sentences:

> ***"****He drank.*
> *He drank until he lost everything.*
> *He drank until his children were taken away."*

The repetition of the words "he drank" conveys just how serious the problem was. Notice that Douglas combines anaphora with the rule of three (having three sentences) to make this a powerful section in his speech.

Here are some other examples of anaphora:

"**I** came, **I** saw, **I** conquered."

— Julius Caesar

"**We shall fight** in France,
We shall fight on the seas and oceans,
We shall fight with growing confidence and growing strength in the air, we shall defend our island, whatever the cost may be.
We shall fight on the beaches,
We shall fight on the landing grounds,
We shall fight in the fields and in the streets,
We shall fight in the hills …"
— Winston Churchill, House of Commons, London, England, 4 June 1940

“My doctor advised me to go home and get my affairs in order, which is doctor’s code for prepare to die.

It means to try to tell your kids everything you thought you’d have the next 10 years to tell them in just a few months.
It means to make sure everything is buttoned up so that it will be as easy as possible for your family.
It means to say your goodbyes.”

— Steve Jobs**,** Stanford Commencement Speech, June 12, 2005:

“For us, they packed up their few worldly possessions and travelled across oceans in search of a new life.
For us, they toiled in sweatshops and settled the West; endured the lash of the whip and plowed the hard earth.
For us, they fought and died, in places like Concord and Gettysburg; Normandy and Khe Sahn.”

— **Barack Obama**, Inaugural Address, January 20, 2009

In a corporate presentation, to motivate the company to take risks and to innovate, the CEO could say:

“We’ll succeed when we innovate.
We’ll succeed when we take risks.
We’ll succeed when we seek out new opportunities.”

Use a Simile
A simile compares one thing to another using the world “like.” It’s a useful tool for getting your audience to better understand your idea:

> *“He was like a boxer in a darkened ring,*
> *fighting an unseen enemy,*
> *swinging at air and emptiness,*
> *unable to land a punch.”*

In this speech, Douglas uses a visual simile to compare Alan Cheek’s desperation to that of a “boxer in a darkened ring.”

What similes can you use in your speech to make it easier for your audience to see what you're saying?

Solution to the Conflict
The solution to Alan's conflict comes when he cries out, "I need help!"

In your speeches, you need to create a conflict and then present a solution to overcome that conflict. Furthermore, you need to present the results of the solution to bring the story to an end.

Repetition of Main Message/Key Phrase
Douglas's main message can be summarized in the short, catchy phrase, "I need help!" Douglas repeats this phrase throughout the speech to drill in the main message of his speech. As a result of the repetition, his message will stick.

Link the Message back to Your Audience
The point of a speech is to add value to the audience's lives. Thus, you should always link your story and your message back to your audience.

In his speech, Douglas directly links the message back to his audience by telling them:

> *Do you know what the truest form of strength is? Stop…and speak the words: "I…need…help."*

The main message of the speech is explicitly made clear and linked to the audience.

Use Sayings and Proverbs to Back Up Your Point
Sayings and proverbs are a great way of adding credibility to your speech. You can use a proverb or a saying which backs up your main message. Douglas uses a Zulu phrase which backs up his message:

> *Umuntungumuntungabantu*
> *It's a Zulu phrase:*
> *"A person is only a person because of other people."*

It serves as an indirect example that proves his main message.

Say It in a Different Language
Douglas repeats the original phrase in Zulu. This allows him to stand out from the other competitors because the judges will remember him for doing something different from the rest of the competition.

> *"Umuntungumuntungabantu"*

Even more importantly, when you say a proverb in a different language than the one your audience understands, your audience members automatically think, "What does that mean?" They become curious to find out what the saying means. When you translate the meaning to English, your audience feels satisfaction.

If You're Going to Tell Another Person's Story, You Need to Link It back to Your Personal Life
Have you ever heard a speaker tell a story about someone else's life? About someone else's conflict?

Even worse, have you heard a speaker give a story that was straight out of *Chicken Soup for the Soul*?

I've heard several such speeches. Some of them were *technically* perfect. They had the characters, the conflict, the dialogue, the cure and the guru. However, despite being technically perfect, these speeches felt as though they were missing an essential ingredient.

What's the missing ingredient? It's personal connection.

While it's perfectly fine to deliver a story about someone else's struggles, you can make it even better by showing how that person's story affected you.

In this story, Douglas delivers a third-person story about Alan Cheek. The main character in this speech is Alan, not Douglas.

If Douglas had *only* told Alan's story and walked off stage without revealing how Douglas's and Alan's stories are connected, listeners would be left thinking, "Shouldn't Alan be the one delivering this speech?" The speech would feel like an "off-the-shelf story" that anyone else could have delivered.

Thankfully, Douglas is a masterful communicator, so he reveals how Alan's story and his life are tied together. Because he reveals that Alan is Douglas's father-in-law, the audience realizes that this is a personal story and they more willingly accept what Douglas has to say because he witnessed first-hand Alan's story:

> *"It was in a quiet room,*
> *down one ward of a whitened clinic where his recovery began,*
> *that I asked his permission*
> *to marry his only daughter."*

The main lesson here is this: If you're going to tell a story about someone else's life, make sure you relate that story to your life. Show how the other person's story impacted you. Share what it taught you and how it changed you. Personalize the third-person story by sharing how you were impacted by the story.

Reveal the Results and the Change in Character

After a major character goes through a conflict and adopts a solution (in this case, Alan asked for help), you need to reveal the results. In other words, did the character manage to overcome the conflict?

The character must change as a result of the conflict. When a character overcomes a conflict, you need to reveal a new aspect of the character's personality that didn't exist before.

In Douglas's speech, the results are that Alan Cheek transformed from being a depressed alcoholic to being sober and strong enough to "walk his baby girl down the aisle."

Overcoming a conflict should always make a character a better person than he was before. The change in character because of overcoming a major

struggle is what inspires audiences.

When you tell your personal story, make sure you reveal the results and the change in your personality as a result of overcoming the conflict.

Teach Your Audience Something New
Douglas's speech teaches his audience something new by showing them a new way of looking at things. His story teaches them something that they might not previously have believed to be true. He teaches his audience that "the truest form of strength is not independence, but Love."

Similarly, Craig Valentine's speech "Your Dream is Not for Sale" teaches audiences something they might not have previously considered: the enemy of the great is not the bad…but the good. It's a new nugget of wisdom.

If you're giving a speech, then give your audience members something of value. Teach them something new or provide them with a new perspective on an issue.

Audience Members Should Look at the Opening Question Differently by the End of the Speech
Douglas opened his speech with the following question:

> *"When you hear*
> ***'Self Improvement'***
> *…what springs to mind?"*

At the beginning of the speech, answers would most likely be along the lines of "a coach," "a course" or a "self-improvement book".

However, by the end of Douglas's speech, the audience has come to look at the question differently. They now know that self-improvement means having the courage to ask for help:

> *Do you know what the truest form of strength is? Stop…and speak the words: "I…need…help."*

You can start off your speech with an engaging you-focused question. By the end of your speech, your audience should look at the question differently than they would have done at the start of the speech.

Close with the Main Message
Douglas closes his speech with his key phrase, “I…need…help”.

Audience members remember the first thing they hear (the *primacy effect)* and the last thing they hear (the *recency effect)*. Thus, by closing with the main message, Douglas ensures that his speech will be remembered.

Speaking Toolkit Summary #4

ACTIONABLE KNOWLEDGE

"If I went back to college again, I'd concentrate on two areas: learning to write and to speak before an audience. Nothing in life is more important than the ability to communicate effectively."
Gerald R. Ford

- Open with a You-focused question
- Use alliteration to strengthen the connection between two similar ideas
- Use alliteration to emphasize the difference between two opposing ideas
- Take on the posture of your character
- Grab the audience's attention first, do the pleasantries later
- Ensure smooth transitions between different parts
- Find a common-point with your audience
- Set the scene quickly
- Make sure your audience can 'see' your speech
- Create a You-focused speech
- Describe your character (physical appearance/ personality)
- Use "We" and "Our" for bad news/negative ideas
- Use imagery to paint pictures in your audiences minds
- Use anaphora + Rule of Three
- Choose the best, most visual words
- Use a simile
- Repeat the key phrase/main message
- Link the message back to your audience
- Using a saying or a proverb to back up your main point
- Repeat the saying/proverb in the original language
- If you're going to tell the story of another person's conflict, you need to link that story back to your personal life
- Reveal the results of the solution
- Characters MUST change as a result of the conflict

- Teach your audience something new/ give them a new technique
- Your audience should look at your opening question differently by the end of your speech
- Close with the main message

Chapter Ten

Wrap Up: How to Own the Room

"Your life tells a story and there is someone out there who needs to hear it. You may think your story is not sensational, but it does not have to be sensational it just has to be sincere. If your audience can relate to you and your experiences, and chances are they will, then you need to tell them what you have been through, share your life, share your love and share your message with the world."
Mark Brown

After reading through and analysing the speeches of four of the best speakers in the world, you've picked up close to a hundred tools on the art of public speaking. This chapter will serve as a useful summary of some of the most important tools and techniques covered in this book. Use these techniques in your next presentation so that you too can "own the room!"

- Pick a topic that your audience will be interested in
- Grab the audience's attention first, do the pleasantries later
- Grab your audience's attention by opening with a you-focused story
- Build rapport with your audience by establishing common points between you and your audience
- Use a we-focus when talking about negative ideas
- Use "most/many" to avoid huge generalizations
- Quote for credibility
- Engage your audience using rhetorical questions
- Make your message memorable by repeating it several times throughout your speech
- Create humor with callbacks
- Use the rule of three for humor

- If you’re poking fun at someone, make sure you have their permission
- Repeat a sentence if you want to emphasize its importance
- Connect your message (and your analogy) to your audience
- Use the tap and transport technique to make your stories “real” for your audience
- Describe your character’s physical appearance or personality so your audience can picture the character in their heads
- Make your delivery dynamic by taking on your characters’ voice and posture
- Adopt your character’s accent when delivering dialogue
- Use pace to recreate the mood
- Use the stage to show your story
- Use alliteration to strengthen the connection between two similar ideas
- Use alliteration to emphasize the difference between two opposing ideas
- Ensure smooth transitions between different parts of your speech
- Use imagery to paint pictures in your audiences minds
- Make sure you link the message back to your audience
- Create empathy by sharing the character’s problem
- If you’re going to tell the story of another person’s conflict, you need to link that story back to your personal life
- Create curiosity about how the problem will be solved by establishing the conflict
- Talk about the cure that helps your character overcome the conflict
- Remember that your characters MUST change as a result of the conflict
- Teach your audience something new
- Close with your speech with your key takeaway message

QUESTIONS OR COMMENTS?

I'd love to hear your thoughts. Email me at: akash.speaker@gmail.com

NEED HELP?

I offer one-on-one coaching over Skype. I'll help you breathe life into your presentations. We'll work on your message, structure, opening, body, closing, humor, slides and presentation delivery. Reach me at akash.speaker@gmail.com

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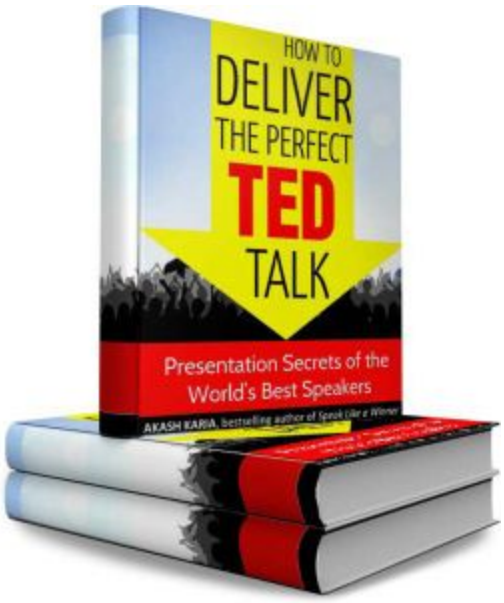

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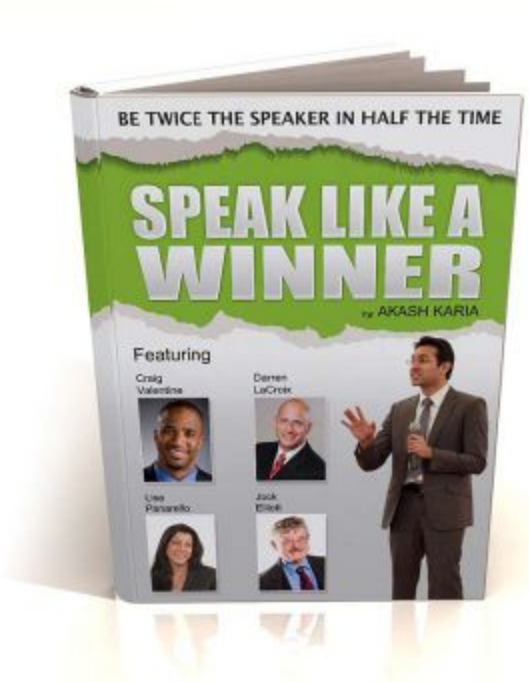
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